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1890/92

Illinois
State
Historical
Survey.
Trustees'
Report.
1892.

THE UNIVERSITY
OF ILLINOIS

LIBRARY

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ILLINOIS HISTORICAL SURVEY

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ILLINOIS STATE

HISTORICAL LIBRARY.

TRUSTEES' REPORT.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS LIBRARY

DEC 11

DECEMBER 10, 1892.

SPRINGFIELD, ILL.:
H. W. ROKKER, STATE PRINTER AND BINDER.
1893.



ILLINOIS STATE

HISTORICAL LIBRARY.

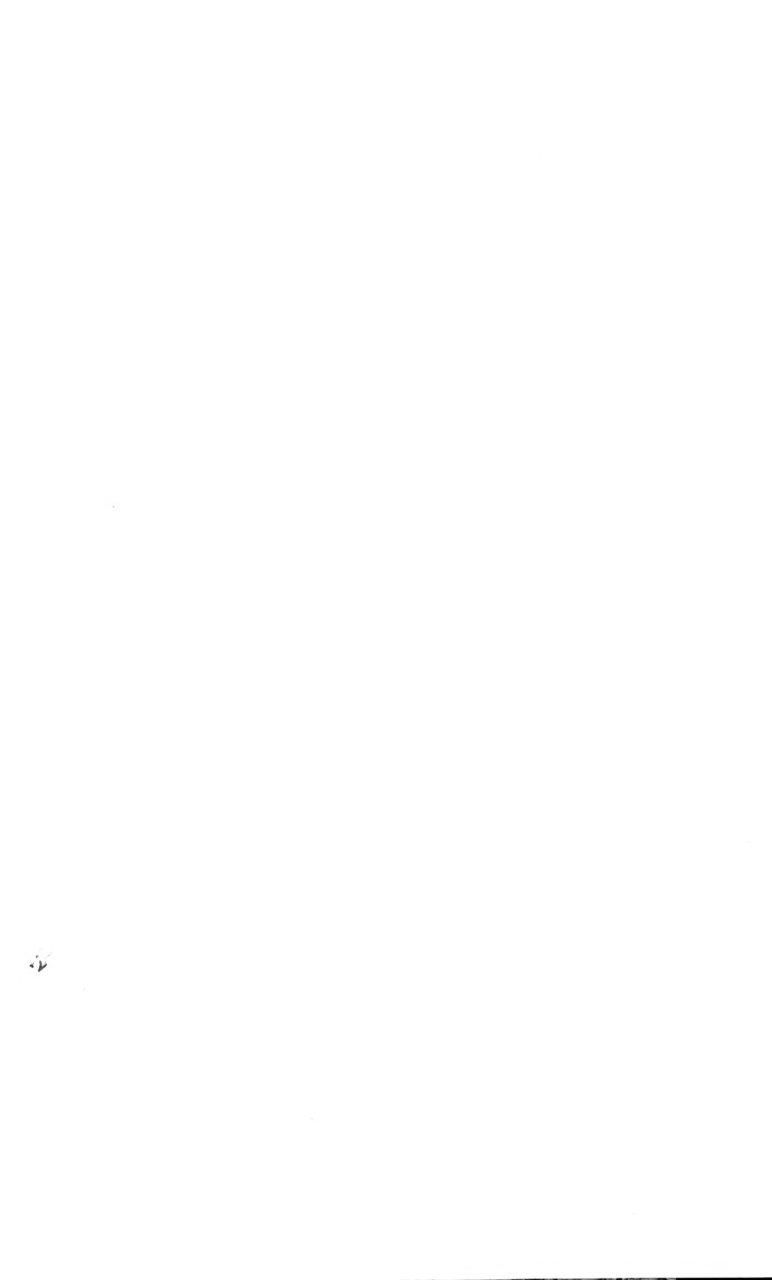
TRUSTEES' REPORT.

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REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES.

ROOMS OF THE ILLINOIS STATE HISTORICAL LIBRARY,
SPRINGFIELD, December 10, 1892.

JOSEPH W. FIFER, *Governor of Illinois*:

SIR:—The Board of Trustees of the Illinois State Historical Library respectfully submit this, their second report, covering their official action since December 16, 1890, the date of their first report.

The number of volumes, pamphlets, maps, etc., has been increased since our former report by 2,153, making the aggregate number, at this date, 3,613. Many of the maps illustrative of early Illinois are ancient, rare and valuable. This enumeration does not, however, include a collection of portraiture, historical views, etc., numbering about 300, among which may be mentioned a fine oil painting of the late Justice Sidney Breese, made shortly before his decease.

Upon entering upon our duties, we found the rooms assigned for the purposes of the Library without furniture; and our immediate necessities were met by borrowing cases, tables, etc., from the committee rooms of the General Assembly. Since then this Board has purchased tables, chairs, etc., and had made two double, two single and two half book-cases; but the increase of volumes and material has been such that as many more like cases are required, and should be secured in the near future.

The act providing for the establishing of the Library appropriated \$2,500 per annum for two years, but the expense of librarian was required to be paid therefrom. The 37th General Assembly, however, cut down the appropriation for maintaining the Library to \$1,000 per annum, and at the same time appropriated \$500 per annum as salary of librarian.

The following exhibit shows the amount, and for what purposes, the appropriation at our command has been expended:

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DISBURSEMENTS.

Purchase of books, etc	\$3,922 98
Furniture and fixtures.....	614 05
Acting librarian (to June 30, 1891).....	291 63
Stationery, etc.....	22 00
Incidental expenses—postage, expressage, freights... ..	78 67
Expenses of trustees.....	384 57
Total.....	\$5,313 90
Balance of appropriation available.....	\$772 31

The object to be attained, as manifested by the terms of the law establishing the Library, is the collection of historical material “useful to the historian” and “bearing upon the political, physical, religious or social history” of the State “from the earliest known period of time.” And it is equally manifest that what has so far been done is but the beginning of this most meritorious work. The efforts of the trustees should be continued; the creation of a great historical library, such as the law contemplates, is a work of patience, of painstaking, discriminating labor, necessarily extending over a period of years.

Meagre as it is, the Library already contains more resources than was at the command of its previous historians. Yet there are many breaks to be bridged, and we are still without chart or compass to penetrate many waste places, where later investigators would likewise wander astray, or fail to follow events that have given shape to our destiny.

Besides this, we are given to cling to errors long after their falsity is known. Stamp the word “history” on a fable and it passes from author to writer and from writer to reader with scarcely a question. For lack of confirmatory proof, or neglect to compare and sift all attainable evidence with care as to the bias, or means of knowledge of the author, writers have hurried their chapters; stated things on doubtful or second-hand report; and ascribed unreal motives to actors of, or mistaken characters in, events which are either misplaced as to venue or order of their occurrence. These faults, together with downright misstatement or merest fiction, have been repeated until they are grained into our belief as veritable history.

Our State has not only suffered greatly in this respect, but still more for lack of breadth in treatment. For it is only within a few years that antiquarians have unearthed precious volumes and maps in Europe; manuscripts from the government archives at London, Paris and Quebec; the private papers of civil and military officers who served or voyaged in these regions from time to time; and the pastoral letters of missionaries who itinerated with the roving savages. And it is from these sources which, besides their accounts of the climate, soil, plants, animals, birds, fishes, and the native races of this country in its undeveloped form, recite time, places and occurrences with all the

freshness of contemporary detail that a more deserving history of "The Illinois," in its former relations to the St. Lawrence basin and the Mississippi valley, is yet to be written.

The collection in the breadth here indicated is necessary, if for no other reason than to correct the falsities that trickle from the very head-spring of our history as printed, or which flow in from thence on either side and greatly discolor the current of events, especially through the periods when "The Illinois" was successively a part of the domain of France and Great Britain. Other crude matter is necessary to illustrate our territorial relations to the Dominion of Virginia and the United States; while added manuscripts, monographs, maps, pamphlets, newspapers, private writings and volumes are necessary to revise or amplify the story of our rise and influence as a great State of the Federal Union. A bare reference to the requisition shows that our State ought to fill and control it. It is a matter of deep public concern; and if left, as heretofore, to private energy or individual aid, it never will be attained.

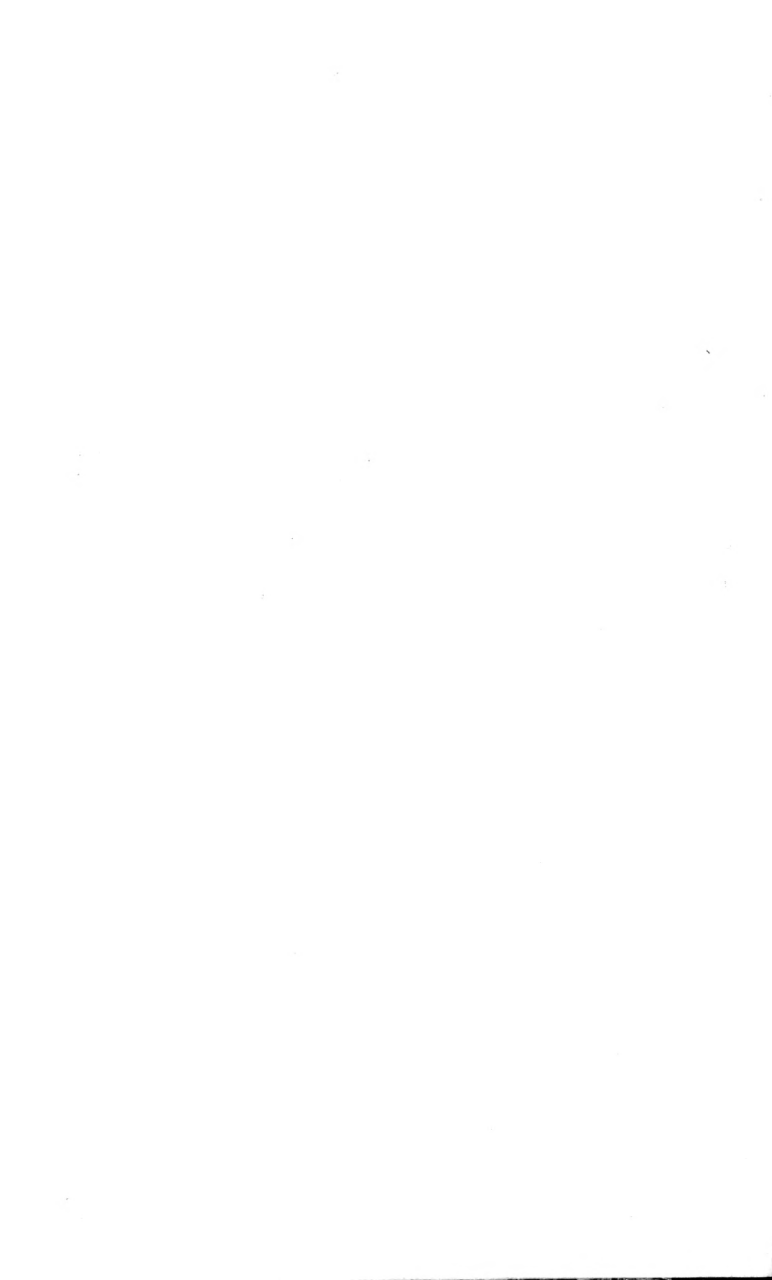
To this end the attention of the General Assembly should be called to the Library, and reasonable annual appropriations for its care, maintenance and growth should be made. In our judgment, such annual appropriation should not be less than \$2,000, exclusive of what is paid for the services of a librarian.

This seems a fitting occasion for the trustees to acknowledge the cordial coöperation of yourself as chief executive, the legislature, the state officers and the press of the State, without which our efforts would have been unavailing.

ATTEST:

W. L. GROSS,
Secretary.

H. W. BECKWITH,
President.







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BIENNIAL REPORT
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